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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
22 October 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos, South Vietnam, Somali Republic, and Iraq

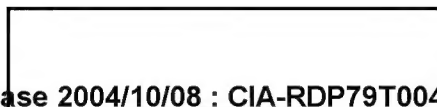
1. Laos

Communist forces in Laos are continuing to increase their capability to initiate military action in key areas throughout Laos, notably the areas about Muong Sing near the Chinese border, the Plaine des Jarres, and Nhommarath in central Laos. While there have as yet been no major actions, recent weeks have seen a step-up in skirmishes and the frequency of artillery exchanges.

Premier Souvanna plans to return to Vientiane about 6 November following visits to London and Moscow. In recent statements he has expressed his belief that a lasting solution to the Laos question must be preceded by the formation of a neutralist regime in South Vietnam, a development which would make unnecessary the use of Laos as a corridor for the passage of North Vietnamese troops to the south.

2. South Vietnam

The tempo of Viet Cong activity probably will increase in the coming weeks, coincident with the dry season. The growing effectiveness of Viet Cong antiaircraft measures was again demonstrated on 19 October when superior government forces were repelled during an operation at Loc Ninh in the delta. During this engagement heavy and accurate automatic weapons fire from Communist entrenchments successfully pinned down the initial attacking elements. Repeated strikes by combat aircraft failed to neutralize the intensive Viet Cong fire.



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Strong government controls have continued to contain popular unrest in South Vietnam, although further trouble may erupt during the visit of the UN fact-finding mission beginning this week, and at the 26 October National Day celebrations.

3. Somali Republic

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[REDACTED] Mogadiscio exaggerated the importance of the incidents of 11-14 October at Daba Goriale and Jijiga and adopted a dynamic attitude to impress the nation's voters during the current municipal election campaign. At least until the elections on 26 November, Mogadiscio will energetically propagandize and protest to international organizations any such incident involving Ethiopia.

4. Iraq

The Syrian troops which moved into Iraq in recent weeks are apparently to be used in combat--rather than merely in support roles--at least in the Zakhu area in extreme northwest Iraq. Iraqi troops thus freed by the Syrian forces will probably be used in an attempt to clear the area to the south and east of Sulamaniyyah in southern Kurdistan, where rebel activity has recently been increasing. It is unlikely, however, that much can be accomplished in either area before the heavy rains that are about to start force a halt to large-scale military operations.

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